



MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Sachi A. Hamai, Executive Officer-
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

At its meeting held August 12, 2008, the Board took the following action:

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The following item was called up for consideration:

The Chief Executive Officer's recommendation to approve an ordinance amending County Code Chapter 1.25 of Title - 1 General Provisions relating to administrative fines and noncompliance fees for code violations and Chapter 13.12 of Title - 13 - Public Peace, Morals and Welfare, relating to graffiti prevention, prohibition and removal; the amendments will provide for violations relating to graffiti offenses, a notice of violation may be issued by a peace officer or a probation officer on behalf of the issuing County department; authorize the Department Head of the issuing department to approve community service in lieu of payment of an administrative fine or noncompliance fee for graffiti offenses; provide for summary abatement for nuisance violations relating to graffiti and a procedure for the County to recoup its abatement costs and impose a lien or special assessment for unpaid costs against the property of the graffiti perpetrator or his or her parent or guardian, if applicable; and provide for the County to recoup its graffiti apprehension and abatement costs associated with graffiti offenses caused by minors through the Probation Officer of the County in juvenile court proceedings; authorize the Department of Ombudsman to serve as the lead agency and issuing department in civil abatement and/or administrative fine and noncompliance fee proceedings for adult graffiti offenses; and cause a certified copy of the ordinance to be forwarded to the Clerk of the Juvenile Court and County Probation Officer upon adoption of ordinance.

Captain Michael Rothans, Sheriff's Department, Steve Gutierrez, Public Safety Manager, City of Pico Rivera, Irene Redondo, Spirit Family Services and Maria Barajas addressed the Board.

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The following statement was entered into the record for Supervisor Molina:

“The annual cost of graffiti abatement for the County is over \$30 million per year in unincorporated communities alone. Those dollars could have been better spent on youth programming, park and libraries services, and funding additional law enforcement services. Unfortunately, those dollars are wasted painting over the tagging of vandals.

“Tragically, the biggest cost has been the loss of life. In the past two years, at least three of my residents have been murdered trying to stop vandals from defacing property-Robert Whitehead in Valinda, Mary Hicks in Pico Rivera and Luis Sandoval in East Los Angeles. Their deaths illustrate how acts of vandalism often escalate to violence, even murder.

“For this reason, changes that strengthen the County’s graffiti ordinances are essential in order to create a system of accountability for both juveniles and adult taggers. The goal is to provide law enforcement with additional tools to successfully identify, arrest and prosecute taggers-and in the cases of first-time youth offenders, to divert them to programming that could potentially change their course to more serious crimes.

“Captain Rothans’ testimony today has demonstrated that the Pico Rivera Vandalism Enforcement Team (VET) has been very successful in reaching this goal and in reducing violent crime and other types of crime. However, these efforts should not be isolated to the Pico Rivera Sheriff Station’s area-they should be established in all unincorporated communities.

“It is also important that these cases are adjudicated as quickly as possible so that more acts of vandalism or more serious crimes are not committed while awaiting a court hearing. We should identify the bottlenecks in the court system which slow down the process and explore if the County can partner with the court system to address the delays.”

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Therefore, on motion of Supervisor Molina, seconded by Supervisor Knabe, unanimously carried, the Board approved the Chief Executive Officer's attached recommendation and instructed the Chief Executive Officer to:

1. Provide a six-month status report on the implementation of the graffiti citation pilot, including the juvenile component, to determine if the existing resources are sufficient; and
2. Evaluate the pilot and the Pico Rivera Vandalism Enforcement Team (VET) program in twelve months and provide a plan to implement this program Countywide, with budget recommendations. The evaluation should also include recommendations on how to streamline the criminal process to adjudicate these cases more quickly.

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Attachment

Copies distributed:

Each Supervisor
Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Ombudsman
Acting Director of Public Works
Captain Michael Rothans
Steve Gutierrez
Irene Redondo
Maria Barajas

(ALSO SEE BOARD ORDER NO. 61 THIS DATE)